

£900 per pair 01903 221500 www.bwspeakers.com

## B&W 705

*Classy standmount with external tweeter and advanced enclosure*

The most obvious similarity between B&W's earlier CDM-1NT (of the CDM-NT-series which the 700-series replaced) and the 705 is the external tube-loaded tweeter. But whereas the former's chunky lines were starting to look a little dated, the new 705 has a sleeker, more streamlined look. It has classy real-wood veneer, and neat front-to-back tapering to help avoid the parallel surfaces that 'focus' internal standing waves. The curved single-piece front and top ensures great stiffness alongside good acoustics. There's also a significant price rise – up to £900 from its predecessor's £750.

The external tweeter provides wide distribution for the high frequencies, while also creating appropriate time alignment between the two drivers. Below the 25mm alloy dome tweeter is a 165mm cast-frame bass/mid driver with 120mm diameter yellow woven Kevlar cone. It features what B&W calls a 'balanced drive' motor, with improved magnetic field symmetry and reduced variations in inductance. A front 'Flowport' reflex-loads the main driver, and a foam bung is supplied to block this if preferred – possibly useful if the speaker has to be close to a wall.

With an all-up weight of 9.5kg, it's the lightest in our test group, but still feels solidly built. Our samples came finished in an attractive cherrywood real-wood veneer, but maple, American walnut, 'rosenut' and black ash are other options. Twin terminal pairs provide bi-wire/amp capabilities.

### SOUND QUALITY

The first thing one notices with this 705 is the sort of freedom from 'boxy' colorations that's uncommon at any price, and which could probably give B&W's more costly Nautilus 805 quite a run for its money. It's solid evidence that standmounts offer their own advantages.

The 705 is really best kept clear of walls, in order to take advantage of its fine midband clarity, superior stereo imaging and wide dispersion, even though

that might well leave the bass end a little light and dry. However, as usual it's worth experimenting with positioning, as rooms vary dramatically, and some wall reinforcement might well be preferred in some cases here.

Given the ingredients, it's hardly surprising that this is no deep-bass excavator, and indeed some may find it a little too bass-shy for their taste. For movie replay, additional subwoofery will certainly be required, but for much musical material the little B&W's bass has an attractive clarity and lightness of touch – one might describe it as a Kylie bottom end – small, but beautifully formed.

The midband has a little extra emphasis, as has the lower treble, while the presence – typically of B&W's models – is slightly restrained. While the net result is not strictly neutral, it's a clever compromise that avoids aggressiveness but preserves good detail, alongside a notably wide dynamic range and good expression. A crucial contributing factor is that the top end has a sweetness and delicacy normally associated with more costly models, and this all adds up to a speaker that's both informative and easy to listen to at the same time.

That, above all, distinguishes this speaker. It's always inviting and very easy to enjoy, does very little wrong and most things rather well. Ultimately it's a very fine compromise, which, after all, is what the art of speaker design is all about. **HFC**



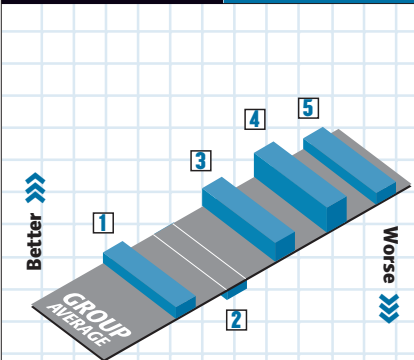
### LAB REPORT

B&W's claim for 89dB sensitivity seems well founded, and is accompanied by a relatively benign impedance characteristic that stays mostly above 6 ohms and never falls below 5 ohms, with just the merest hint of perturbation at 1kHz. The port here is tuned to around 41Hz, and its output seems well damped.

The overall tonal balance looks well enough ordered, though it could have been smoother and is not without certain obvious characteristics. The midband is a shade prominent, 250-800Hz, while the presence zone output, 1.5-3.5kHz, is a trifle shy. A modest 4.5kHz peak will add some top end 'zing'. The bass below 200Hz is a little weak overall, though decent extension is maintained down to 30Hz under in-room conditions.

The 705's crossover point is at 2kHz electrically speaking, though the actual acoustic transition is close to 3.5kHz. The pair-match here was impressively close.

### HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> 10%
- 2] Bass extension >> -10%
- 3] Ease of drive >> 15%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> 20%
- 5] Response smoothness >> 10%

### SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	89dB	89dB
Impedance (nominal/mean)	8ohm	9ohm
Est. bass extension (-6dB, Hz)	38Hz	35Hz

### VERDICT

SOUND >> 86%

PRACTICALITY >> 84%

BUILD >> 90%

VALUE >> 84%

This pretty little standmount is always inviting and very easy to enjoy. It lacks some bass weight and welly, but is otherwise a very good compromise, with a fine freedom from boxiness and a sweet and open top end.

**HI-FI CHOICE**  
OVERALL SCORE >> **86%**